

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 04123 300800Z
ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 EB-08 L-03 ARA-10 ACDA-12
/093 W

-----010886 300804Z /12

P 300652Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3377
INFO SECDEF WASHDC (ISA/FMRA) PRIORITY
CSAF WASHDC (XOXXI/XOXXP/XOXXW) PRIORITY
AFSC ANDREWS AFB MD (FA)
4950TW WRIGHT PATTERSON AFB OH (DOMM) PRIORITY
CINCPAC HONOLULU PRIORITY
PACAF HICKAM AFB HI PRIORITY
AUSDAO LIMA PERU PRIORITY
USDAO PARIS FRANCE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 4123

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: MAR OCLR AS
SUBJECT: SATELLITE COMMUNICATION (SATCOM) PROJECT 1227

REF: STATE 039451 (142344Z FEB 78)

1. SENSITIVE TO THE POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF US MILITARY
ACTIVITIES IN AUSTRALIA IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE RECENT
NORTH WEST CAPE IMBROGLIO, THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS (AT THE BEHEST, WE UNDERSTAND, OF THE AUSTRALIAN
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE) HAS PUT TO THE EMBASSY A NUMBER
OF QUESTIONS ABOUT SATCOM PROJECT 1227 TO WHICH DFA WOULD
LIKE ANSWERS WHICH CAN BE USED TO SATISFY "POLICY LEVELS"
IN THE TWO DEPARTMENTS. DFA WAS CAREFUL TO AVOID IMPLYING
THAT APPROVAL FOR THE FORTHCOMING OVERFLIGHTS WOULD NOT
BE GRANTED IN ABSENCE OF REPLIES TO THESE QUESTIONS,
BUT WE GATHER THAT ADOD IS DELAYING GIVING OVERFLIGHT
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APPROVAL PENDING ANSWERS.

2. A) WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE COMMUNICATIONS
SYSTEM BEING TESTED, AND OVER WHAT PERIOD AND WHERE?
ARE THESE TESTS IN-FLIGHT AND/OR ON THE GROUND?
B) WHAT SATELLITE OR SATELLITES ARE TO BE
ACCESSED AND WHAT CAPABILITIES ON THE SATELLITE(S)

ARE TO BE USED?

C) WHAT FREQUENCIES ARE TO BE USED?

D) WHY IS IT NECESSARY TO CONDUCT SUCH TRIALS
OVER AUSTRALIAN TERRITORY?

E) IS ANY ACCESS TO EITHER AUSTRALIAN OR
AUSTRALIAN/US COMMUNICATIONS INSTALLATIONS INTENDED?
IF SO, WHICH OF THESE, FOR WHAT DURATION AND FOR WHAT
PURPOSE?

F) BY WHICH AUTHORITY IN THE US IS THIS TRIAL BEING
SPONSORED?

G) WHAT EQUIPMENT WILL BE CARRIED BY THE AIRCRAFT
IN CONNECTION WITH THESE TESTS?

H) DEFENCE ALSO NOTED THAT THE SYDNEY-EDINBURGH
AND EDINBURGH-PERTH LEGS OF THE PROPOSED FLIGHT, AT
SIX HOURS EACH, WOULD TAKE SOMETHING OF THE ORDER OF
THREE TIMES AS LONG AS THE NORMAL FLIGHT TIMES FOR A
BOEING 707 BETWEEN THESE POINTS. IF THE REASON
FOR THIS IS NOT APPARENT FROM ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS
LISTED ABOVE, WE WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR AN INDICATION
OF WHAT THE PROPOSED FLIGHT PLAN WILL BE.

3. EMBASSY HAS GIVEN GENERAL REPLIES TO SEVERAL OF
THE QUESTIONS RAISED, AND MADE THE POINT THAT A NUMBER
OF THEM ARE TOO TECHNICAL IN NATURE FOR POLICY LEVELS
TO BE CONCERNED WITH. NONETHELESS, POLICY LEVELS IN
THE GOA ARE CLEARLY SKITTISH ABOUT BEING CAUGHT UNAWARE
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OF US MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN AND OVER AUSTRALIA, AND WE
HAVE TOLD THEM THAT WE WOULD TRY TO BE AS FORTHCOMING
AS POSSIBLE. PLEASE ADVISE.
ALSTON

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NNN

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